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GOOD WILL AND COOPERATION IN INDUSTRY. FROM THE WORKER'S POINT OF VIEW

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THAT there is a labor problem, that there is a lack of good will and cooperation in industry, is quite well known and understood by those who are giving their thought and attention to this subject. How are we going to solve this problem, or rather, how are we going to create that good will and cooperation which are so necessary and essential to industry and, it seems to me, essential to every phase of our life? Without it industry must suffer, without it the nation and everything that has to do with our everyday life must suffer.

I am going to mention a few things which I believe will have some relation to the subject, some things that have been tried and proven to be impracticable and ineffective.

We hear much about the so-called "open shop"—the American Plan—the Bonus System—Industrial Democracy—House and Senate Plan—Court Injunctions—Industrial Courts. All of these are ideas which have been brought forward by many employers who believed that in the inauguration and adoption of these ideas they would solve their problem in industry and create good will, cooperation, harmony and production, all of the things which must come where good will and cooperation are in effect.

These methods have been tried and they have been failures. The workers have become dissatisfied, have refused to continue under these conditions, and the result is that the problem has remained unsolved.

I am one of those who are not afraid of any method that is going to solve the labor problem. Some employers believe that by the use of the writ of injunction they will solve it. Some believe that the creation of industrial courts such as they have in Kansas and are attempting to inaugurate in other places, is the remedy, yet all of these things have failed and labor unrest continues because none of these plans have brought relief to labor. We must go back further to the root of the evil.

First of all, we want to establish in America a one-hundred per-cent brand of Americanism, and upon that idea as a foundation build our institutions and promote the things that are going to have as their background ideals which are worth living and dying for, if necessary, in order that we may continue to be a great nation.

If we could bring back now the same spirit that existed during the war, when every man, woman and child in the whole country who had the American idea and spirit, united not only to help save the country but to help save the world; if we could organize that same good will and cooperation, we would come very near to solving the problem that has placed America today in the chaotic condition in which we find it, and we would be enjoying that prosperity which should come to us after the great struggle and the great war which we helped so much to win.

Our problems are not going to be solved by the creation of groups which through bitterness and antagonism are unwilling to recognize the rights of others. If the employers expect that the courts, through force, can compel workers to accept that which they are not willing to accept, conditions which they have no say in making, then they cannot expect good will and cooperation from the workers. If the employer is not willing for his employees to organize, if the employer is not willing to make a collective bargain with his employees, if he is not willing to establish conditions other than those which he lays down himself, he can not expect that there will be good will and cooperation in his industry.

I want to see that condition come from a definite plan, a plan dealing with American problems, predicated and based upon fair and square dealings between men. We need more humanizing and less commercializing influences in the world if we ever hope to see good will established in industry.

Our problem in America is much more difficult than that of any other nation. We hear much about what they do in other countries. Great Britain is not confronted with employers' demands for an open shop; that is not an issue in Great Britain. The employers do not deny the workers the right to organize and to have a say in making a collective bargain. They deal with their problems as British workmen, as British employers

and as business men. In France it is a French problem and is dealt with from the point of view of the French workers and their employers. In Italy it is the same. In Germany and in all other countries it is a racial problem. In America we have all of the nationalities of the world and while we are trying to mold them into American citizens and trying to get them to understand the American idea of things, you will realize that it is most difficult to get them to understand that there should be good will, that there should be cooperation and authority and order, because they are trying to solve their problems from the point of view of the country from which they came.

Strange as it may seem, the employers are helping them along in this direction. We have heard much about radicalism, we have heard much about Bolshevism and other movements of the kind, and some employers, whether intentionally or not, because of their attitude in dealing with labor, are responsible in a large measure for creating these very movements. Good will has never been found between employer and employee where bitterness and hate are known to exist. Social and economic justice will do more to establish good will in industry than any other agency.

The American Federation of Labor has proved that in the most critical times in the history of our country we have as trade unions tried to better and improve the conditions of living among the workers, and we stand for America and its institutions first, last and all the time. We have proved that in the past and we are not going to deviate from that program now or in the future.

We welcome a movement coming from any direction which will improve the relationship between the employers and employees and bring about and establish good will and cooperation. We are willing to do our share, making due allowance for the fact that there are many in our ranks and many who are not within our membership who have come to this country ignorant of our laws and customs, who have never had the opportunity for the development which is necessary to train them to our methods of workmanship or the training which makes for better citizenship. We have our faults just as well as any other institution but we have the right to claim that

we have done many constructive things as an organization, not solely in the interests of our own membership, but constructive things in the way of legislation, and that we have been of help generally to make a better nation.

I do not want to see the time come when any group in this country will become so powerful and strong that by its power it may work hardships or create conditions of suffering among some other group. I want to see the employers, the so-called captains of finance, the employees, the educators and all others, form into one group which believes, first of all, that a plan must be worked out, based upon the idea that America must be protected as a nation and upon that structure build the things which mean progress in the interest of all, and cut out, wherever we find them, the things which are harmful and reactionary and contrary to the concepts and beliefs of that which stands for America.

We can do these things, possibly not within our time, but it is the duty of all of us who believe that something must be done to unite to stop human suffering and injustice first, then suffering and injustice to business will cease to exist. Let us knock the barnacles off America's industrial life and as patriotic Americans work together in the interest of America and its institutions. It is an indictment against us that we have so many millions of our citizens unemployed at this time and it is an indictment against us that we are constantly at war with each other.

It seems to me that we learned some lessons during the war, in that great hardship and struggle we went through. The beautiful lesson we learned was seeing men and women of every station in life standing shoulder to shoulder in those trying times, willing to give everything they possessed in this world, even life itself. They gave this cooperation, this good will, that America might do its part in helping to save the world for humanity and democracy. Let us bring back that spirit again. It is not for the workers or for the employers to do it but it is for all of us to bring it back in the interest of the country as a whole.

We can not go on in this way indefinitely. There is bound to be a limit and I believe we have almost reached that limit now. Let us have industrial peace and at this time when the represen-

tatives of the nations of the world are ready to convene at our capital to discuss the world peace and the limitation of armament, might it not be the psychological moment for us to take upon ourselves the responsibility of solving the problem of industrial war and substituting industrial peace and cooperation in the interests of human progress. No nation can go on successfully that is constantly at war within itself. We have had too much of that. It has been one of our greatest handicaps. Even though some of the threatened conflicts have not actually taken place, the very fact that they were discussed and published broadcast created almost the same effect as if they had actually occurred.

I am not afraid of the introduction of any movement that is based upon justice and fair play. I have seen many things proposed that I naturally disagreed with but I am willing to join with the movement that is going to be helpful in this direction, not only as a duty but as a responsibility. If there were more people in our country who were willing to spare some of their time in this constructive work rather than stand back and constantly find fault with those who are trying to do something helpful, it seems to me that we would make more progress than we have up to the present time.

I do not look for any help from the kind of employer or the profiteer who shouted the loudest about his Americanism during the war and then—the only thing he did to be helpful—raised the price of his commodities to the consumer. No problem can be solved by men who are in that group. Happily for us they are in a very small minority and there are still a sufficient number of people in America who believe that these problems can be solved and who not only believe but are willing to give their time and their money and such influence as they may possess to help in that direction. I welcome it. I know that organized labor does not fear any movement that is going to bring about industrial peace to replace these industrial wars which not only have been destructive to business but have brought such a tremendous hardship to the workers because of lack of employment. I would prefer to obtain good will and establish confidence and respect among employers through honest, square dealing, rather than to secure it through force or coercive power.

We may not in our time see the conditions brought about that we hope for, but they are bound to come, and I venture the assertion that they will be seen in another period of the world's history, possibly when we are not here. But while we are occupying any positions where we can give our help, where we can give our influence in promoting this necessary work, it is our duty to do so.

We claim the right to organize as workers. We claim the right of collective bargaining and the right to have a say in making the conditions under which the workers shall be employed. We claim that the hours of employment should be reduced to the point where the health and safety of the workers will be safeguarded. If those who seek to destroy the trade unions are successful in their efforts they will not succeed in solving the labor problem or in any way help to improve the industrial and economic conditions of the country. Such a movement, if successful, would create a condition of radicalism and anarchy which would be uncontrollable.

All of the things which are offered today as remedies have proved to be failures and instead of settling the workers' problems they have done nothing except to create bitterness and antagonism between the workers and the employers. That is not solving industrial unrest.

Let us work together on these questions which mean so much to us as a nation and when we give our job over to some one else to do, we will have the satisfaction of knowing that we gave the best we could in our time and made the world, or at least tried to make the world, a little better place than we found it and a better place for all to live in.